

**VOLUNTEERISM  
IN THE  
WASHINGTON STATE FIRE SERVICE**

**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP**

BY: Steven G. Wrightson  
Fire Chief  
Clark County Fire District 3  
Brush Prairie, WA

An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the  
Executive Fire Officer Program

March 1998

## **ABSTRACT**

Many aspects of today's American lifestyle are changing the way people interact with each other. The changes are affecting our participation in political, religious, community, and all other forms of volunteerism. The fire service in the state of Washington depends heavily on volunteers to provide emergency service to the majority of communities across the state. The problem is the potential for volunteerism to decline in the Washington fire service.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the history of volunteerism in America's fire service, evaluate the current trends in volunteerism in the United States, and evaluate the condition of volunteer firefighter programs in the state of Washington.

The study used an evaluative research methodology to answer the following questions:

1. What is the history of volunteerism in America's fire service?
2. What are the current national trends in volunteerism?
3. What is the condition of volunteer programs in Washington?

A literature review was conducted to examine existing documentation relative to the topic of volunteerism. Information from professional journals, magazines, and books gathered from local libraries; the Learning Resource Center at the National Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland; and from information on the Internet. Two surveys were completed in the state of Washington. The first

survey, “A Survey of Volunteer Firefighter Programs in Washington State”, was completed by 42 Fire Chiefs in Washington. The second survey, “Volunteer Firefighter Survey”, was completed by 135 active volunteer firefighters in seven fire districts of Clark County, Washington.

The research revealed a strong tradition of volunteerism in America’s fire service. Three-fourths of the nation’s firefighters today are volunteers. The vast majority of fire departments in the nation (83%) serve communities of less than 10,000 population. Volunteers make up 78% of the firefighters in the state of Washington. Volunteerism is critical to the emergency response needs of nearly every community in the state. The need for and reliance upon volunteer firefighters is very significant.

The research clearly found nationwide trends indicating a decline in volunteerism. Every volunteer organization in the country is challenged by the changes in lifestyles, economic pressures, diminishing available free time and changing attitudes.

Volunteerism is a part of the American spirit. The willingness of people to serve for the common good is part of our tradition. Those techniques that have worked in the past to build volunteer firefighter programs must be continued. New techniques must be developed. If we truly value the service of volunteer firefighters, then we must do the things that encourage rather than discourage voluntary participation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iv
Introduction .....	1
Background and Significance .....	3
Literature Review .....	5
Procedures .....	14
Results .....	16
Discussion .....	28
Recommendations .....	35
References .....	40

## **INTRODUCTION**

Volunteerism was a cornerstone of the foundation and formation of the United States of America. As far back as the beginnings of the country, volunteers have played a key role in many important moments of our history. Prior to the Revolutionary War volunteers met under the Liberty Tree in Boston to discuss the unfairness of British rule and develop plans of action. The Committees of Correspondence organized volunteers during the same period, leading up to such events as the Boston Tea Party in 1773. These volunteers later formed the Sons of Liberty and fought for American independence in 1776.

Volunteers were instrumental in the formation of America's fire service. According to the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Protection Handbook, colonial communities required each householder to keep two fire buckets and, when the church bells rang an alarm, to report to the scene of the fire to form lines for passing water from wells or springs. Boston citizens were subject to fines for failing to respond to fires with buckets to participate in the bucket brigade. By 1715, Boston had six volunteer fire companies with engines (p. 10-4).

The tradition of volunteers in the fire service has continued and expanded with today's fire service. Volunteer firefighters comprise approximately 75% of America's firefighting force. They are relied on by many communities as the first line of defense for fires, emergency medical incidents, natural disasters,

hazardous materials, water rescue emergencies, confined space emergencies, and other public service calls.

Trends in volunteerism in the United States appear to indicate problems are ahead for fire service organizations that depend heavily on volunteer participation. Many fire departments entered the 1980's with waiting lists of people who wanted to join. Now the same departments are lacking recruits.

Although local situations exist where changes in population have had an adverse affect upon staffing of volunteer fire departments, the bulk of the problem has to do with changes in people's life styles. Some of the factors involved are time constraints, changing attitudes, work conflicts, single parent families, economic conditions, and a number of others.

These and other factors may be impacting volunteer firefighter programs in Washington State. The problem is the potential for volunteerism to decline in the Washington fire service.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the history of volunteerism in America's fire service, evaluate the current trends in volunteerism in the United States, and evaluate the condition of volunteer firefighter programs in the state of Washington.

This study uses an evaluative research methodology. The research questions to be answered are:

1. What is the history of volunteerism in America's fire service?

2. What are the current national trends in volunteerism?
3. What is the condition of volunteer fire programs in Washington?

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Robert Putnam discussed American's strong propensity to join associations and volunteer in his 1995 Journal of Democracy article, *Bowling*

*Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*. Putnam states the following:

Ever since the publication of Alex de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, the United States has played a central role in systematic studies of the links between democracy and civil society. Although this is in part because trends in American life are often regarded as harbingers of social modernization, it is also because America has traditionally been considered unusually "civic".

When Tocqueville visited the United States in the 1830's, it was the American's propensity for civic association that most impressed him as the key to their unprecedented ability to make democracy work. "Americans of all ages, all stations of life, and all types of disposition," he observed, "are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types – religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute. .... Nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America" (p. 65).

This American propensity to join associations was a major factor in the formation of the nation's fire service. Until the mid-1800's, most firefighting in the United States was done by volunteers. The exception was Boston, where the

selectmen not only purchased the first fire engine in 1678, but also established the first American firehouse to keep it in and hired a paid officer as captain of the rig.

Volunteer fire companies existed in cities up and down the eastern seaboard, and their members became very tightly knit social groups in their various communities. Volunteer fire departments still provide the majority of fire protection to many communities across the country. An estimated 800,000 to 900,000 volunteer firefighters are still providing fire protection for a large proportion of these communities. The typical volunteers of today are dedicated to the protection of life and property, from fire and a variety of other emergency services (Lavoie, p.24).

The changing nature of today's society, with increased obligations and changing family structure, has reduced levels of volunteerism in all areas.

According to Nancy Grant and David Hoover, in their book *Fire Service Administration*, they state the following:

In spite of the call for volunteerism throughout the 1980's, there was an actual decrease in the number of individuals volunteering their time to assist different community, social, civic, or religious organizations. Thus, it is not surprising that many volunteer fire departments are also experiencing difficulties recruiting members (p. 132).

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the history of volunteerism in America's fire service, evaluate the current trends in volunteerism, and to evaluate the condition of volunteer firefighter programs in the state of Washington. The research can assist fire departments in Washington in



understanding the trends in volunteerism and develop program changes to deal with the challenges.

In Executive Leadership, Executive Fire Officers learn to conceptualize and use key processes to improve executive-level skills. The class curriculum provides senior officers with a broad perspective on various facets of fire and emergency services administration. This research focuses on a large percentage of the country's fire service personnel delivery system: volunteer firefighters. This research should be helpful for those responsible for the variety of challenges in administering volunteer fire programs.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this literature review was to examine existing documentation available on the subject of volunteerism and to apply that research to volunteer firefighter programs in Washington State. The first consideration was to review information on the history of volunteerism in America's fire service. The second consideration was to review information on the current trends in volunteerism in the country. The final consideration was to evaluate the condition of volunteer programs in the state Washington.

## HISTORY OF VOLUNTEERISM IN AMERICA'S FIRE SERVICE

Volunteers were instrumental in the formation of America's fire service. Colonial communities required each householder to keep two fire buckets and, when the church bells rang an alarm, to report to the scene of the fire to form lines for passing water from wells or springs. As late as 1810, Boston citizens were subject to a \$10 fine for failure to respond to alarms with their buckets. When hand pump fire engines were obtained, teams were organized to operate them. Fire wardens were appointed in Boston in 1711. With the members of their staffs, fire wardens responded to fires and supervised citizen bucket brigades. By 1715, Boston had six volunteer fire companies with engines (NFPA, 1997, p. 10-4).

Dr Robert Emrich states:

Benjamin Franklin has been credited with forming the first volunteer fire department in his community of Philadelphia. In 1736, the Union Fire Company was formed by him and 30 other civic-minded citizens joined in the common effort of combating fire and its destructive effects upon the growing city. It is worth noting that the fire service in its beginnings was to a great extent a volunteer effort. Somewhat similar to the state militias organized to provide for the common defense, communities organized fire companies to deal with the ravages of fire and to prevent unchecked conflagration (Emrich, 1989, p.22).

According to the book, *Managing Fire Services*:

Until the mid-1800's, most firefighting was done by volunteers. The exception was Boston, where the selectmen not only purchased the first fire engine in 1678, but also established the first American firehouse to keep it in and hired a paid officer as captain of the rig.

Volunteer fire companies existed in cities up and down the eastern seaboard, and their members became very tightly knit social groups in their various communities. Even today, volunteer fire companies constitute major social groups in certain parts of the United States. Many of the early companies were proud, exclusive, influential, and competitive.

Rivalry, indiscretions, riots, and disrespect for the law left citizens disenchanted with and even hostile toward volunteers. Nevertheless, American cities were vulnerable to fire, and organized fire protection was essential. Until some means was developed to reduce the number of firefighters needed to combat a fire, it was economically impossible to change over to a paid department.

A fire in a Cincinnati wood-planing mill on a fall night in 1851 set in motion the events that led to the hiring of America's first professional firefighters. On that night, Western Fire and Hose Company No. 3 and Washington Company No. 1 began fighting; ten more companies joined the melee. These companies were joined by friends from across the river in Covington, Kentucky, who sighted the flames and came to their aid. The mill burned to the ground as the thirteen companies rioted. The citizens were outraged. The citizens demanded that city officials take corrective action. By 1853 Cincinnati became a paid fire department (Lavoie, p.24).

Lack of discipline of volunteer firefighters, coupled with their resistance to the introduction of steam-pump engines, led to the organization of paid fire departments. In 1855 two steamers were delivered to New York City, but the volunteer firefighters would not use them. Ten years later the "Metropolitan Fire Department," using steamers replaced New York's volunteer force (NFPA,1997 p10-4).

An estimated 800,000 to 900,000 volunteer firefighters are still providing fire protection for a large proportion of the nation's communities. In 1995, 17 percent of all fire departments in the United States served communities with populations of 10,000 or more; 30 percent protected communities with

populations from 2,500 to 10,000; 53 percent served communities with populations of less than 2,500, or served the fire protection needs of rural areas. Three-fourths (74 percent) of 1995 fire departments consisted entirely of volunteers. Even if a town of 2,500 inhabitants had as many as three career firefighters per 1,000 population, which is considerably above the big-city average, there would be only two members on each shift, so a full paid fire department would not be feasible unless a substantial tax base existed to support it (NFPA, 1997, p.10-4).

Trends in volunteerism in the United States appear to indicate problems are ahead for fire service organizations that depend heavily on volunteer participation. Many fire departments entered the 1980's with waiting lists of people who wanted to join. Now the same departments are lacking recruits.

Although local situations exist where changes in population have had an adverse affect upon staffing of volunteer fire departments, the bulk of the problem has to do with changes in people's life styles. Some of the factors involved are time constraints, changing attitudes, and work conflicts (Meyer, 1990, p.70).

## CURRENT TRENDS IN VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism never occurs in a vacuum. If the economy or the population shifts, volunteering will reflect the changes just as does the job market or any other aspect of society. So it is important for the leader of volunteers to understand the trends and issues having an impact on current and prospective volunteers at any given time.

One of the issues having a profound affect on anyone working with volunteers is the evolution of vocabulary. What is called "volunteering" and who is a "volunteer" are not universally accepted truths. Today a wide range of words and phrases are used by many different

constituencies who may or may not be talking about the same thing. Consider just a few of these terms: citizen participation; mutual aid; activism; community service; neighborliness. In some cases the vocabulary issue is purely semantics and in others it reflects fundamental differences (Ellis, 1996, p.1).

According to Robert Putnam, many aspects of today's American lifestyle are changing the way people interact with each other. The changes are affecting our participation in political and local community issues.

A series of identical questions posed by the Roper Organization to a national sample ten times each year over the last two decades reveals that since 1973 the number of Americans who report that "in the last year" they have "attended a public meeting on town or school affairs" has fallen by more than a third (from 22 percent in 1973 to 13 percent in 1993). Similar (or even greater) relative declines are evident in responses to questions about attending a political rally or speech, serving on a committee of some local organization, and working for a political party. By almost every measure, American's direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation, despite the fact that average levels of education – the best individual-level predictor of political participation—have risen sharply throughout this period. Every year over the last decade or two, millions more have withdrawn from the affairs of their communities.

Religious affiliation is by far the most common associational membership among Americans. The United States has more houses of worship per capita than any other nation. The 1960's witnessed a significant drop in reported weekly churchgoing—from roughly 48 percent in the late 1950s to roughly 41 percent in the early 1970s. Since then, it has stagnated or declined further. Meanwhile data from the General Social Survey shows a modest decline in membership in all "church-related-groups" over the last 20 years. It would seem, then, that net participation by Americans, both in religious services and church related groups, has declined modestly (by perhaps a sixth) since the 1960s (Putnam, 1995, p.68).

According to Susan Ellis, President of Energize, Inc., the following is another important factor in the decline of volunteerism:

- Divorce, single parenthood by choice, both partners in the paid workforce, blended step-families – our concept of “family” is changing. How does this impact on volunteering?
- Stressed-out parents with less time to fill the traditional volunteer roles of Scout Leader, PTA officer, and homeroom aid.
- Fewer people at home during the day to help the school or youth group.
- A large number of non-custodial parents seeking new relationships with their children (Ellis, 1996, p.2).

Volunteer coordinators are constantly dealing with changing demographics in their communities, always trying to stay ahead of the curve of new residents with new needs, a variety of concerns and different backgrounds.

All demographers agree that people are living longer and healthier. We are pushing back the age of retirement and all our images of “old” are under question. On one side of the scale, there is a large pool of younger seniors with skills, mobility, and time. On the other side, the fastest growing age category is ninety-plus and few organizations have perfected ways to tap this newest group of potential volunteers (Ellis, 1996, p.2).

The constant changing economy affects people’s attitudes about volunteerism. Changes impact the availability of volunteer time in all aspects of their life.

For some time now North America has been battling a changing economy. Whether or not you assess economic conditions as good or bad depends greatly on where you live and what job you hold. Some areas have been devastated by the loss of jobs; others have benefited from new industries. It is generally acknowledged that the split between the have’s and have-not’s widens each year.

Uninformed people think that volunteering lessens when economic times are hard. This thinking is based on the misconception that only people who are well off can enjoy the luxury of volunteering. Experienced volunteer program managers can attest to the fact that hard times bring out the best in people. It is actually easier to recruit when social problems are self-evident. Even if people are suffering

economically themselves, it is fulfilling to help others who may be worse off (Ellis, 1996, p.2).

A counterpoint to much of this discussion was printed in the October 5, 1997 *Columbian Newspaper* in an editorial written by Jane Eisner. Eisner states:

There's some balm for stubborn optimists like me. William Galston and Peter Levine – big thinkers on civic renewal – show that associational life in America is far from dead. In fact 82 percent of Americans belong to at least one voluntary association; only Iceland, Sweden, and the Netherlands boast a higher rate.

But just as many suspected, the nature of those associations is changing. Membership in all-male and all-female organizations has dipped dramatically, most often because women are now joining professional associations. That's good for egalitarianism in the workplace, but may not bode well for civic renewal. Fraternizing only with folks who share your job and career interests put you in a more homogenous, like-minded milieu than the old-fashioned, class-less women's auxiliary or men's club.

Church groups? Holding steady. Mailing-list groups like the National Rifle Association or the Children's Defense Fund? Zooming forward. Here, too, there's room for worry, if check writing becomes the central form of civic participation – especially for national groups that don't have local chapters encouraging involvement and growing leaders.

So the volunteering is there; the question remains whether acts of service themselves will lead to better citizenship. Here, Galston and Levine offer a challenging idea: "Citizens, particularly the youngest, seem to be shifting their preferred civic involvement from official politics to the voluntary sector."

In other words, civic life may be transformed from a training ground for wider political involvement to a way of helping without messing with politicians (p. B9).

Susan Ellis, sums up the trends in volunteerism:

Some trends pose problems, other open new doors of possibility. Some begin as negative and surprise us by becoming positive—and vice versa. Prospective recruits are dealing with many things: changes in their jobs, building a personal family life, finding ways to have some fun,

keeping healthy. In addition to the private sphere, people do have an interest in the social welfare of their community. Your challenge is to inject your invitation to volunteer into the mix of things demanding people's time and attention. The more aware you are of what concerns your audience, the better able you will be to integrate volunteering into people's lifestyles. therefore you will be a more successful recruiter (Ellis, 1996, p.3)

The criteria for success of a volunteer fire department are the same ones that effect other volunteer organizations. This criteria can also work against it. Demographics are a key factor in the success or failure of a fire department.

As employment, economic conditions and social problems begin to erode the stability of a community, a reduction in the number of available firefighters almost surely follows. General changes in personal attitudes, as well as environmental forces, present a definite challenge to the volunteer fire service. Two factors seem relevant. First, there has been a growing need for persons to devote more time to their careers and work life to maintain or improve their present economic status. Two-wage earner families and multiple jobs are becoming a way of life for many Americans. Obviously this reduction in free time affects the pool of potential volunteer firefighters. Secondly, there has been a trend toward individualism and self-gratification.

The economic pressures of modern society are bearing down on the middle class. Experience indicates this is where the majority of our firefighting personnel come from. If society values the services provided by volunteers it must do those things that encourage rather than discourage voluntary participation in community service (Emrich, 1989, p.22).

Bill Randleman, in his editorial for the July 1988 issue of, *Fire Chief*, states:

This rapidly changing world is making it more difficult each day for our nation's volunteer firefighters to carry out their mission. Even the old problems such as recruitment, motivation, and funding are becoming more difficult. But there are new threats on the horizon.

Recently a young volunteer fire chief told me that he was having difficulty recruiting young people. Why? "Young married people can't afford to own a home in my city anymore," he said. "With the high cost



of real estate the pool of young people we formerly drew our recruits from is gone” (p. 47).

“While I believe the standard of living is better today than it was 20 years ago when I was starting a family, people now have to work multiple jobs to attain that standard,” says Bill Murray, president of the First Aid Council of New Jersey in Shrewsbury. “The big vacuum right now is in the age group that is in its childrearing stage” (Parr, 1989, p.14).

In the opinions of some, current training and recertification requirements are beginning to take their toll on a number of volunteers, who feel the expectations are excessive for people who are already donating their time and energy. Recent changes greatly increasing the amount of time, training, and certification to meet safety standards are beginning to stress the volunteer system in many parts of this country.

In the United States Fire Administration book, *Retention and Recruitment in the Volunteer Fire Service: Problems and Solutions*, the following observation is made:

People join the volunteer fire service to fulfill basic human needs that are not met in their regular careers. If a department can meet those needs, retention and recruitment will be less problematic. One thing is certain: The problems of retention and recruitment need to be continually addressed if the volunteer fire service is to remain an American tradition (p. 5).

## VOLUNTEER FIRE PROGRAMS IN WASHINGTON STATE

According to the Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs, volunteers make up about 78% of the total number of firefighters in the State of Washington. Approximately 23,000 firefighters serve the roughly 560 fire departments in communities across the state. Approximately 18,000 of those firefighters are volunteers. All volunteer or combination volunteer/paid fire departments provide fire and emergency services to the vast majority of communities in the state.

Results from a survey conducted in this research indicated that volunteerism is declining in the state. Over the past five years, 60.9% of the Fire Chiefs completing the survey reported a decline in the percentage of volunteers in their fire department. Nearly 48.8% of the survey participants reported they depend less on volunteers now than they did five years ago. Community demographics, too many certifications, too many training requirements, and changing attitudes of volunteer personnel were all reasons given by the survey participants for this apparent decline. The results of this survey of Fire Chiefs, and a survey of active volunteers in Clark County, Washington is discussed in the Procedures and Results section of this research.

## **PROCEDURES**

To prepare for this research several resources were utilized. Information from professional journals, magazines, and books were gathered at the Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon; the Clark College Library, Vancouver, Washington; the Fort Vancouver Regional Library, Vancouver, Washington; and the Learning Resource Center located at the National Fire Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland. The research also utilized information gathered through two surveys completed in Washington State.

The first survey, “A Survey of Volunteer Firefighter Programs in Washington State”, was sent to fifty Fire Chiefs in Washington. The survey determined the type of fire department surveyed: paid, volunteer, or combination. The size of the fire department and percentage of personnel considered volunteer was also determined by the survey. The survey asked Fire Chiefs to identify the different types of volunteers they utilized in their service and whether their dependence on volunteers had increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past five years. The Fire Chiefs were also asked to identify whether the percentage of volunteers in their department had increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past five years. Further, the Fire Chiefs were asked to identify the reasons their percentage of volunteers had increased, decreased, or stayed the same. Forty-two of the fifty (84%) surveys were returned. The results of this survey are included in this research.

The second survey, “Volunteer Firefighter Survey”, was completed by 135 Volunteer Firefighters from seven fire agencies in Clark County Washington. The number of completed surveys represented about 45% of the total number of volunteer firefighters in Clark County, Washington. The confidential survey asked each volunteer to list their age; sex; number of years as a Volunteer Firefighter; the amount of schooling completed; their type of work; their hobbies; and if they volunteer for other organizations. The survey also asked a number of other questions involving activity levels, interference with family, spouse and employer support for the volunteer, why they volunteer, and thoughts on why they or others may find it difficult to volunteer. This survey was designed to gather the perspective of our current volunteer firefighter force and compare their thoughts to those administering programs throughout the state.

The research assumed that the information obtained was based on facts and did not reflect the bias of the authors. The surveys were designed to be totally confidential, and thus, the survey results gathered are assumed to be honest opinions of the survey participants.

The limitation of the survey research was the number of survey participants. Like any survey, the more participants, the better the information. However, the substantial return of the survey sent out to fifty random Fire Chiefs throughout Washington (84%), indicated a strong willingness to participate in this research for the betterment of volunteer firefighter programs and the fire service

in general. The 135 volunteer firefighter surveys returned represented a substantial number of the total number volunteers in Clark County, Washington. More surveys of the same group would help substantiate the findings. The limitations to gather more included time and an efficient medium for contacting all volunteers.

## **RESULTS**

The research included two surveys conducted in Washington State. The first survey, “A Survey of Volunteer Firefighter Programs in Washington State”, was sent out randomly to 50 Fire Chiefs in 22 counties of the state. The number of surveys returned totaled 42, or 84% of the surveys sent. The second survey, “Volunteer Firefighter Survey”, was completed by 135 active volunteer firefighters in six fire districts in Clark County, Washington. The 135 surveys returned amounted to approximately 45% of the total number of volunteer firefighters in Clark County. Both survey forms and survey results are located in Appendix 1. The results are discussed below.

The first survey, completed by 42 Fire Chiefs in Washington State, was intended to give the perspective of the administrators of volunteer firefighter programs in the state. The purpose of this survey was to identify norms in department characteristics and attitudes in the state. Thirty-eight of the surveys

returned were from combination paid/volunteer departments; one was from an all paid department; and three were from fully volunteer departments. The average number of personnel in the departments surveyed totaled 84.6. Approximately 76% of the personnel in the surveyed departments were considered volunteers. The survey group identified a number of different types of volunteers in service in their departments. The types and numbers of volunteers being utilized include the following:

<u>Percentage/Depts.</u>	<u>Type of Volunteers</u>
<b>97.6% (40)</b>	<b>Home Volunteers.</b> Volunteers who live in the community and respond from home to the station or emergency.
<b>17.0% (7)</b>	<b>Student Interns.</b> Volunteers receiving college credit for their service.
<b>29.2% (12)</b>	<b>Shift Volunteers.</b> Volunteers who live at the fire station.
<b>43.9% (18)</b>	<b>Resident Volunteers.</b> Volunteers who stay at the station for a designated number of hours.
<b>41.5% (17)</b>	<b>Part-time Employees.</b> Personnel considered volunteers under the State of Washington Volunteer Pension and Relief Standards.
<b>29.2% (12)</b>	<b>EMS only volunteers.</b>
<b>26.8% (11)</b>	<b>Fire suppression only volunteers.</b>
<b>36.6% (15)</b>	<b>Non-emergency response volunteers.</b>
<b>4.8% (2)</b>	<b>High School Cadets.</b>
<b>9.7% (4)</b>	<b>Other</b>

The survey asked the Fire Chiefs, “Do you depend more on volunteers now than you did five years ago?” The survey results indicated:

**36.6 % (15)** Departments depend more on volunteers now.  
**48.8% (20)** Depend less on volunteers now.  
**14.6% (7)** Depend the same on volunteers as they did five years ago.

The survey asked, “ Over the past five years has the percentage of volunteer personnel in your fire department increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

The results indicated the following:

**12.1% (5)** Increased  
**60.9% (25)** Decreased  
**29.3% (12)** Stayed the same

When asked, “If the total percentage of volunteers has decreased, Why?

The following results were posted as percentages of departments indicating this was their first, second, or third reason for the decrease:

<u>Percentage of Departments</u>	<u>Reason for Decrease</u>
4%	Department choice top reduce number of volunteers.
32%	Department has hired more paid personnel.
<b>52%</b>	<b>Training requirements have become too difficult for volunteers to maintain.</b>
24%	Activity requirements have become too difficult for volunteers to maintain.

32%	Volunteer family and employment obligations.
4%	Volunteers are not adequately reimbursed for their contribution.
8%	Volunteers are not adequately recognized for their contribution.
12%	Lack of quality activity for volunteers to perform.
40%	Too many certifications, standards, and mandates for volunteer personnel to meet.
<b>56%</b>	<b>Community demographics have changed. New people are not interested or don't have the time to volunteer.</b>
<b>48%</b>	<b>Young volunteers are joining for experience and career opportunity only.</b>
4%	Long commutes to/from work – too much travel time- too tired to volunteer.
4%	Created higher volunteer activity standards – lost less active volunteers.
4%	Change

When asked, “If the percentage of total volunteers has increased or stayed the same; Why?” The following results were posted as the percentage of departments selecting each of the following as the first, second, or third reason for the increase or status quo:

**Percentage of Departments**  
**50.0%**

**Reason for Increase or Stayed the Same**  
**We have gained a number of new volunteers looking for career opportunity and experience.**



<b>37.5%</b>	<b>We have increased the volunteer numbers by opening up more volunteer opportunities such as non-emergency response volunteers.</b>
12.5%	We are experiencing a new enthusiasm in our community to volunteer.
<b>68.8%</b>	<b>We work very hard to promote the volunteer program and are committed to increasing the volunteer program in the future.</b>
6.3%	Created new volunteer programs to appeal to more people.
6.3%	Raised volunteer standards- Less disparity between volunteer/paid staff.
6.3%	Low Turnover – usually only when someone retires.
6.3%	Very popular career oriented program.
6.3%	Husband/wife teams join and stay.
6.3%	Solid dedicated volunteers tend to stay (Older, more stable)
	<u>Others</u>
	Cadet program has attracted new volunteers.
	We advertise the education and retirement benefits.
	New volunteers are keeping up with existing ones.

The second survey completed in this research, “Volunteer Firefighter Survey” was returned by 135 active volunteers from seven fire districts in Clark County, Washington. The survey results are discussed below:

The average length of service for the volunteers returning surveys was 6.75 years. The average age of the survey group was 31.7 years. The largest group of respondents was in the age bracket 20-29 years old (36.3%); followed by the 40-49 year olds (23.7%); the 30-39 years old age bracket (14.0%); the 50+ age bracket (13.3%); and lastly, the under 20 year old bracket (12.5%). 118 (87.4%) of the survey participants were males, and 17 (12.6%) were females.

When asked to indicate their level of completed education the results were:

Some High School	7	(5.2%)
High School	28	(20.7%)
Some College	65	(48.1%)
Associates Degree	21	(15.5%)
Bachelors Degree	7	(5.2%)
Graduate Degree	7	(5.2%)

There was no particular pattern to the type of employment the volunteers participating in this survey work at. Most hobbies centered on the outdoors and physically active types of interests. A large number of the respondents enjoy hiking, skiing, camping, fishing, hunting, bicycling, working out, snowboarding, skating, baseball, basketball, and photography.

When asked, “Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?” the results were:

Yes	61	(45.2%)	No	74	(54.8%)
-----	----	---------	----	----	---------

The most active age group volunteering for other organizations was the 40-49 year olds (68.7%); followed by the 50+ year olds (66.6%); the under 20 year old group (47%); the 20-29 year olds (28.6%); and lastly the 30-39 year olds (26.3%). Most other volunteer activities included church organizations; boy and girl scouts; Little League; Soccer; Community Service Clubs; Search and Rescue Teams; 4-H; Military Reserve; and a number of local associations and organizations.

When asked the question, “How often does being a volunteer firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?” The respondents said:

Often	21	(15.5%)
Sometimes	67	(49.6%)
Seldom	30	(22.2%)
Never	17	(12.6%)

When asked, “Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?” the respondents said:

Strongly approves	56	(41.5%)
Approves	50	(37.0%)
Doesn’t care	7	(5.2%)
Disapproves	2	(1.5%)
Strongly disapproves	0	(0%)
Doesn’t apply	19	(14.1%)

When asked, “Does your employer approve of your service as a volunteer firefighter?” the respondents said:

Strongly approves	45	(34.8%)
Approves	51	(37.8%)
Doesn't Care	26	(19.3%)
Disapproves	1	(0.7%)
Strongly disapproves	0	(0%)
Doesn't know I volunteer	4	(2.9%)
Doesn't apply	5	(3.7%)

When asked, “What percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?” the respondents said:

Less than 10%	25	(18.5%)
10% - 25%	48	(35.6%)
26% - 50%	34	(25.2%)
51% - 75%	16	(11.9%)
More than 75%	10	(7.4%)
No answer	2	(1.5%)

The age group spending the most “free” time on fire department related activities was the 20-29 year olds, with 34.7% spending more than 50% of their free time on fire department related activities.

When asked, “Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a volunteer firefighter?” the respondents said:

Much more than I expected	10	(7.4%)
More than I expected	33	(24.4%)
About what I expected	78	(57.8%)
Less than I expected	13	(9.6%)
Much less than I expected	1	(0.7%)

When asked, “Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?” the respondents said:

Never	75	(55.5%)
Seldom	31	(22.9%)
Sometimes	26	(19.35%)
Often	3	(2.2%)

The survey participants were asked to identify their top three reasons for becoming a volunteer firefighter. The following results were posted as numbers and percentages of individuals indicating this was their first, second, or third reason for joining:

<b>112</b>	<b>(82.9%)</b>	<b>This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.</b>
19	(14.1%)	Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
<b>97</b>	<b>(71.8%)</b>	<b>This is a chance for me to some exciting things and help people at the same time.</b>
46	(34.1%)	The friendships and teamwork attract me.
<b>57</b>	<b>(42.2%)</b>	<b>I want to be a career firefighter.</b>
23	(17.0%)	I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
16	(11.9%)	I have many friends in the fire department.

An interesting statistic from this survey was that 77.5% of the 20-29 year old respondents indicated one of their top three reasons for becoming a volunteer

firefighter was to become a career firefighter. 70.6% of the under 20 year old group indicated the same reason.

The survey participants were asked to identify their top three reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. The following results were posted as numbers and percentages of individuals indicating this was their first, second, or third reasons why volunteers would quit:

40	(29.6%)	Personality conflict with another member.
35	(25.9%)	Too much training required.
<b>94</b>	<b>(69.6%)</b>	<b>Too much time required.</b>
22	(16.3%)	Too many rules and regulations in the fire department.
<b>64</b>	<b>(47.4%)</b>	<b>Just lost interest.</b>
22	(16.3%)	Too dangerous.
1	(0.7%)	Too much supervision.
<b>46</b>	<b>(34.1%)</b>	<b>It's not as much fun as it used to be.</b>
4	(2.9%)	Career vs. Volunteer Conflicts.
2	(1.9%)	Under-utilization of Volunteers.
3	(2.2%)	Conflict with family obligations/activities.
3	(2.2%)	Not enough calls.

The survey asked for additional comments. The following is a selection of some of the comments received:

“I am very happy and proud to be a volunteer firefighter in our town. For the size of our town, we have a very good fire department and the people are proud of it. I'll retire from it, I'll not quit, or leave it until I must.”

“Some of the paid faction are very reluctant to even include volunteers in to the working system. Therefore if you are not needed you won't be there. This

comes from command and individual engine companies. Volunteers try to work with paid, but sometimes it doesn't work the other way."

"I can't imagine not being a volunteer firefighter, after 18 years, it is a way of life for me. The best thing of all is the chance to help my fellow man in his time of need."

"Getting hard to find time from family to complete all of the training required in today's firefighting world."

"You know you're doing something of value when someone tells you later how much you helped them during their crisis. I wish I had a Wednesday night with family more often."

"This fire department has an excellent program. I am very proud and honored to be a member of this team."

"As this community continues to grow the fire department must also grow. This district is no longer a small community, therefore a lot more time and training is required of a volunteer to keep up with training requirements."

"It is rewarding, challenging, and very time consuming. I have been able to continue only because of a supportive spouse."

"I think that too many fire departments have become too focused on paid professional personnel. The standards of training have become so intense and time consuming that it is getting harder for citizen firefighters to maintain these

standards and do the things that need to be done to have a good quality home life.”

“This is the best thing I have ever done in my life. The “family” in the firefighting area from department to department is so great. An incredible bond no matter where you go. Good down to earth people that are great to work with and greatly add to the overall experience.”

“My experience with many departments that I have been with will only enhance my ability to become a career firefighter. Although I have been a volunteer for little over two years, I would not trade the experience for anything.”

“I don’t like the negative relationships between volunteers and paid firefighters.”

“This is the best organization I belong to. I have learned a lot and have made many friends over the years.”

“As everyone is aware, there are increasing requirements and restrictions for volunteers. In years past (when most rural districts were strictly volunteer) there was more of an urgency or need for everyone to respond and most volunteers responded to nearly every call. Now it’s more discretionary and there is less of a feeling that the response of any one individual volunteer is important – i.e. paid or voluntary staffed personnel will be available to handle the calls.”



“It is too bad that volunteer and career departments can’t better co-exist. There always seems to be problems when the paid staff doesn’t remember where they came from.”

“I think volunteer firefighting is the best experience I have ever had. It will look really good on a job interview. I am not really worried about that, I really like the fires and saving lives part most of all. I enjoy spending the night at the station, and I think it helps me think about pursuing a personal career.”

“Being a volunteer is the best thing I have ever done.”

## **DISCUSSION**

The research clearly defined the tradition of volunteerism in America’s fire service. From the days of the Benjamin Franklin and the founders of our country, to the volunteer departments steeped in tradition today, America has depended on the volunteer firefighter for community protection. More than 75% of fire departments in America today are still entirely volunteer. An estimated 83% of the fire departments in the nation protect communities of less than 10,000 population. The need for and reliance upon volunteer firefighters is very significant in the United States.

Trends in volunteerism in the country indicate challenges are ahead for the fire service. Many fire departments entered the 1980’s with waiting

lists of people who wanted to join. Now the same departments are lacking recruits.

The research found that current trends in volunteerism indicate a decline in the number of Americans interested or available to volunteer. Whether you call it citizen participation, mutual aid, activism, community service, or volunteerism, the practice of individual participation in community affairs is declining. Less people are participating in community events, local politics, P.T.A, and other affairs than any time before. Research shows that millions more people have withdrawn from community affairs in the last decade. Some of the reasons include changing demographics; increased numbers of single parent families; more families supported by two wage earners, or wage earners with two or more jobs; fewer people at home to raise the family; an aging population; more mobile society; increased concern for individual gratification and less on community involvement; and a changing economy.

The fire service faces the same challenges as the rest of society. The fire service is competing for the limited time of potential volunteer candidates.

The criteria for success of a volunteer fire department are the same ones that can work against it. Demographics are a key factor in the success or failure of a fire department. As employment, economic conditions and social problems begin to erode the stability of a community, a reduction in the number of available firefighters almost surely follows. General changes in personal attitudes, as well

as environmental forces, present a definite challenge to the volunteer fire service. Two factors seem relevant. First, there has been a growing need for persons to devote more time to their careers and work life to maintain or improve their present economic status. Two-wage earner families and multiple jobs are becoming a way of life for many Americans. Obviously this reduction in free time affects the pool of potential volunteer firefighters. Secondly, there has been a trend toward individualism and self-gratification (Emrich, 1989, p.22).

The economic pressures of modern society are bearing down on the middle class. Experience indicates this is where the majority of our firefighting personnel come from. If society values the services provided by volunteers it must do those things that encourage rather than discourage voluntary participation in community service (Emrich, 1989, p.22).

This rapidly changing world is making it more difficult each day for our nation's volunteer firefighters to carry out their mission. Even the old problems such as recruitment, motivation, and funding are becoming more difficult. Training and certification requirements present additional challenges to the amount of time a volunteer has to give. As the fire service sets higher standards of safety and certification, volunteers begin to ask the question, "How much time can I give?"

In the State of Washington roughly 78% of the total number of firefighters are volunteers. Approximately 23,000 firefighters serve the roughly 560 fire

departments in communities across the state. Approximately 18,000 of those firefighters are volunteers. All volunteer or Combination volunteer/paid fire departments provide fire and emergency services to the vast majority communities in the state. The health and future of volunteer programs is a critical issue to our community policy makers. Decreasing tax revenues, increased citizen concern and scrutiny over their tax dollars, and the quality of life safety in our communities hangs in the balance. The fire service must find ways to build the volunteer programs in this state within in the limits and realities of today's societal pressures.

The research surveys clarified a number of concerns being faced in the fire service in Washington. The survey of Fire Chiefs statewide reported an obvious decline in volunteerism in the short time frame of the last five years. Nearly 48.8% reported they depend less on volunteers now than they did five years ago, and an impressive 60.9% reported a decline in the percentage of volunteers in their department over the last five years. This is a dramatic drop in volunteerism and a great reason for concern.

The Fire Chiefs that reported a decline in volunteers identified the four most important reasons why they think this is happening. The greatest percentage of them (56.0%) felt that changing demographics, people with less time and interest in volunteering is hurting the volunteer program. Another 52% felt training requirements are too difficult for most volunteers to keep up with.

Another 48% identified young volunteers joining to get experience for a career, but not staying around long, as a reason for the decline. Nearly 40% identified the certifications, standards and mandates, as the reason volunteers aren't staying.

Comparing the Fire Chief's answers with those of the 135 volunteers in the Clark County, Washington survey the research found some common ground. The top four reasons the volunteers thought volunteers would quit were: too much time required (69.6%); volunteers losing interest (47.4%); volunteering not being as much fun as it used to be (34.1%); and personality conflicts (29.9%). A substantial number of the Fire Chiefs and volunteers agree that the amount of time and training required of a volunteer is impacting the number of people willing to volunteer and stay. The increased training requirements and certifications take more time, aren't as much fun as many other activities, and cause people to lose interest. A number of volunteers also expressed concerns for personality conflicts, including conflicts with paid personnel.

Fire Chiefs that claimed an increase or no change in the number of volunteers over the last five years said the reason for this was: they work very hard to promote their volunteer programs and are committed to increasing them in the future (68.8%); the increase in the number of young volunteers looking for a career (50%); and opening up more opportunities for people to volunteer (37.5%).

Most of the volunteers in the survey that made additional comments, expressed their pride in their fire departments. Their comments fall in

line with the Fire Chiefs reporting a commitment to their volunteer programs.

The volunteers apparently can sense their importance to this group of Fire Chiefs and to the service they provide for the fire department.

The 50% of Fire Chiefs reporting an increase or no change who identified the young volunteers looking for career opportunity is a concern for the fire service. The volunteer survey indicated greater than 70% of the 18-29 year old volunteers, volunteer for the career opportunities. While this is a temporary benefit to any fire department - young, aggressive and interested volunteers - what happens when the job opportunities are just not there? Will the 18-29 year olds that don't get hired stay on as active volunteers? Will the fire department that depends on this group for the future volunteer pool, be faced with a tremendous shortage of help? What happens when the current older, more established volunteers retire? The statistics do not look encouraging.

The survey of volunteers presented a number of interesting trends. The fire service in Clark County is still highly male. Only 12.6% of the volunteer surveys returned were from females. This is still a challenge for the fire service to be more representative of the communities we serve.

A large number of the volunteers surveyed (74.1%) have attended college or have college degrees. This is an impressive statistic, one of many that indicates our volunteers are smarter and of higher quality than ever before. This may also

be a statement about the communities we serve and the pool of potential candidates we have to draw from.

Most volunteers report that being a volunteer sometimes or often interrupts their family life. About 65% reported interruptions in their life due to fire department activities. While most seemed to take this fact in stride as part of the job in their written comments, many still were concerned about the impact on time the fire department creates. Close to 50% of the respondents to the survey reported they contribute more than 25% of their “free” time to their fire department.

Most volunteers in the survey are not volunteering for other organizations. Only 45.7% volunteer for other community activities. Time is the critical factor. The 30-39 year old volunteers in the survey volunteer had the lowest outside volunteer rates. Only 26.3% were able to volunteer outside of the fire department.

One of the most promising statistics from the volunteer survey was that 78% seldom or never have considered quitting the fire department. This is encouraging. Even with the time constraints of modern life, the training requirements, and personality conflicts, the volunteers in the Clark County, Washington survey are hanging in there. We must, however, be concerned with the reality of changing lifestyles and time pressures.

Volunteers still volunteer to help their communities. 82% of the volunteers in this survey reported they do it because of they want to contribute

significantly to their community. 71.8% report they do it for the exciting things they get to do and help people at the same time. These statistics tie them back to the traditions of the American fire service and is still one of our greatest attributes. People can still volunteer and in turn contribute significantly to their community. People can still do the exciting things they learn and practice in a fire department and help people at the same time. There is a basic human need to feel a part of something good, that is important and makes a difference. The fire service will always have this to offer and attract good quality volunteers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Volunteerism is indeed a part of the American spirit. The willingness of people to serve for the common good is a part of our tradition. Those techniques which have worked in the past must be continued. New ones must be developed to deal with the ever-changing way of life in our country (Emrich, 1989, p.22).

The fire service has a long and proud tradition of service. We need to build on that foundation of tradition as we look for new ways to develop our volunteer programs. 83% of today's fire departments still serve communities of less than 10,000 people. We should not forget the significance of community and the concept of "neighbor-helping-neighbors as we look for solutions to our future



volunteer programs. If society truly values the service of volunteers, then we must do the things that encourage rather than discourage voluntary participation.

The first recommendation for the research is for administrators of volunteer programs to develop a staffing plan for the future of their department. The administrator should identify the department mission, values and current personnel situation. The situation statement should identify positive attributes as well as any challenges facing the department today. Staffing goals should be listed with objectives for the future. The department must determine their level of commitment to the volunteer program and then identify objectives and strategies for reaching the goals identified. Once these goals, objectives, and strategies are identified, the entire department will understand the direction and commitment for the volunteer program, and proceed as identified.

The amount of time required, training hours and required certifications clearly are concerns of active volunteers and their Fire Chiefs. There should be no compromise on the issues of safety. All fire departments must strive to meet all safety requirements and national standards for safety. However, fire department administrators should question anything that presents additional training time and certifications for volunteers. Is it required, needed, or applicable to your fire department? We must never sacrifice safety for the sake of time, but we must be reasonable on what we require our volunteers to do.

The contribution volunteers make to their communities is substantial.

We all need to do a better job of recognizing our volunteers in the public. Fire departments should work harder to present a clear picture to their communities on what it takes to be a volunteer, and what sacrifices their volunteer neighbors are making for them. Issues such as lower taxes and personnel efficiencies should be emphasized. Promoting the dedication and commitment of your current volunteers may encourage others to join the team.

Demographics were mentioned often in the research as a challenge for those seeking volunteers. Fire service administrators must study the demographics in their communities to understand the changes taking place. Population statistics are available from county, city, state and the federal government. Surveying neighborhoods and staying in touch with other community groups are ways to gather this information. Knowing the demographics of the community will insure a better understanding of the pool of volunteers available for recruitment.

A number of volunteers expressed the opinion that volunteering is not as much fun as it used to be. The challenge is to make it more fun while meeting the basic requirements of law and the standards of a quality service. Present more social events for your volunteers. Recognize your volunteers by putting their names on readerboards, giving them more opportunity for recognition and other incentives, and any other ideas your own volunteers may help you identify.

Award banquets are effective means of formalizing recognition awards. An impressive number of Fire Chiefs (68.8%) who reported increased volunteerism in their departments said this was happening because they work very hard to promote their volunteer programs and are committed to increasing them in the future.

The research identified a potential concern for the future. That concern was the growing trend for the 18-29 year old volunteers focusing on volunteering for the purpose of being hired as paid firefighters. It is important that fire service administrators be up front with these individuals, clearly explaining employment opportunities. Employment opportunities are limited and it is only fair to let these individuals know the challenges of being hired. Fire departments should not focus all of their energy on only these individuals. They should be recognized for the commitment and contribution they make to the fire department, but we should also recognize their limitations. We should appreciate their temporary status and utilize their energy as long as we have them.

Family interruptions and time away from home are a real concern for today's volunteer. Fire departments need to recognize this and make every attempt to make the volunteer experience timely and efficient. Nobody has time to waste on unnecessary projects and programs. Fire departments might consider assigning volunteers to shifts or cycles, in order to give them a break from the everyday interruptions.

Fire departments should be encouraged by the volunteers who answered that they volunteer because they want to make a significant contribution their community. Nearly 82% of the volunteers surveyed said that is one of the top three reasons they volunteer. We should build on this natural attraction to the fire service by emphasizing the need for and contributions of our volunteers. We should feel encouraged by this statistic and appreciate even more the volunteer personnel that we have on our teams.

Fire departments committed to volunteer programs must focus their energies on the needs of their volunteers. We must understand the limitations on the time and availability of our volunteers in today's world. Volunteerism is a part of the American spirit. The willingness of people to serve for the common good is part of our tradition. Those techniques that have worked in the past to build volunteer firefighter programs must be continued. New techniques must be developed. If we truly value the service of volunteer firefighters, then we must do the things that encourage rather than discourage voluntary participation.

## REFERENCES

- Eisner, Jane R. (1997, October 5). The Social Gap. The Columbian, p. B9.
- Ellis, Susan J. (1996). Trends and Issues in Volunteerism (Computer: [ENERGIZESE@aol.com](mailto:ENERGIZESE@aol.com)). Energize, Inc.
- Emrich, Dr. Robert L. (1989, January). Volunteerism into the 90's. Chief Fire Executive. pp.22-26.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency. (1993). Retention and Recruitment in the Volunteer Fire Service: Problems and Solutions (FA-138). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Grant, N., Hoover, D. (1994). Fire Service Administration. Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association.
- Lavoie, Kenneth R. (1988). Overview of the fire protection system. In Granito, John A. & Coleman, Ronny J. (Ed.). Managing Fire Services (pp.30-48). Washington, DC: International City Management Association.
- Meyer, Steve. (1990, November). Recruiting and retaining volunteers. Fire Chief, pp70-73.
- National Fire Protection Association. (1997). Fire Protection Handbook (18<sup>th</sup> ed.). Quincy, MA: Author.
- Parr, Nils A. (1989, June). Too many volunteers? Emergency Medical Services, pp.14-20.
- Putnam, Robert D. (1995, January). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. Journal of Democracy, pp.65-77.
- Randleman, William. (1988, July). Are our volunteers in jeopardy? Fire Chief, p. 47.

## **APPENDIX 1**

## A Survey of Volunteer Firefighter Programs In Washington State

1. Our fire department is:  
☐ Fully Paid  
☐ Combination Paid/Volunteer  
☐ Fully Volunteer
2. The total number of personnel in our fire department is \_\_\_\_\_ people.
3. Volunteer personnel account for approximately \_\_\_\_\_% of our total personnel.
4. What types of volunteers do you have? Check each category you have:  
☐ **Home Volunteers**. Volunteers who live in the community and respond from home to the station or emergency.  
☐ **Student Interns**. Volunteers receiving college credit for their service.  
☐ **Resident Volunteers**. Volunteers who live at the fire station.  
☐ **Shift Volunteers**. Volunteers who stay at the station for a designated number of hours. (May or may not live in the jurisdiction).  
☐ **Part-time Employees**. Personnel considered volunteers under the Volunteer Pension and Relief standards  
☐ **EMS** only volunteers.  
☐ **Fire suppression** only volunteers.  
☐ **Non-emergency** response volunteers.  
☐ **Other** (explain)
5. Do you depend more on volunteers now than you did five years ago?  
☐ Depend more on volunteers now  
☐ Depend less on volunteers now
6. Over the past five years has the percentage of volunteer personnel in your fire department increased, decreased, or stayed the same?  
☐ Increased  
☐ Decreased  
☐ Stayed the same
7. If the total percentage of volunteers has decreased; Why?  
  
Please indicate the top three reasons by marking "1", "2", and "3" on the appropriate line. You may add your own reasons to the rating.  
  
☐ Department choice to reduce number of volunteers

- \_\_\_\_\_ Department has hired more paid personnel.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Training requirements have become too difficult for Volunteers to maintain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Activity requirements have become too difficult for Volunteers to maintain.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer family and employment obligations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers are not adequately reimbursed for their contribution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteers are not adequately recognized for their contribution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of quality activity for volunteers to perform.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Too many certifications, standards, and mandates for volunteer personnel to meet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Community demographics have changed. New people are not interested or don't have the time to volunteer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Young volunteers are joining for experience and career opportunity only. They do not stay around long.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

8. If the total percentage of volunteers has increased or stayed the same; Why?

Please indicate the top three reasons by marking a "1", "2", or "3" next to the appropriate reason. You may add your own reason to the ranking.

- \_\_\_\_\_ We have gained a number of new volunteers looking for career opportunity and experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We have increased the volunteer numbers by opening up more volunteer opportunities such as non-emergency response volunteers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We are experiencing a new enthusiasm in our community to volunteer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We work very hard to promote the volunteer program and are committed to increasing the volunteer program in the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a copy of the results of this survey \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I would like a copy of the completed NFA Research paper \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

***Thank you for participating in this survey.  
Please return in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.***



# A Survey of Volunteer Firefighter Programs In Washington State

## ***Survey Results from 42 Fire Districts in Washington***

1. Our fire department is:
 

<u>1</u>	Fully Paid
<u>38</u>	Combination Paid/Volunteer
<u>3</u>	Fully Volunteer
  
2. The total number of personnel in our fire department is 84.6 people.  
*(Average of the 41 combination/all volunteer districts responding to the survey)*
  
3. Volunteer personnel account for approximately 76 % of our total personnel. *(Average of the 41 combination/ all volunteer districts responding to the survey)*
  
4. What types of volunteers do you have? Check each category you have:  
*Of the 41 combination/all volunteer districts responding to survey:*
  - 97.6% **Home Volunteers**. Volunteers who live in the community and respond from home to the station or emergency.
  - 17% **Student Interns**. Volunteers receiving college credit for their service.
  - 43.9% **Resident Volunteers**. Volunteers who live at the fire station.
  - 29.2% **Shift Volunteers**. Volunteers who stay at the station for a designated number of hours. (May or may not live in the jurisdiction).
  - 41.5% **Part-time Employees**. Personnel considered volunteers under the Volunteer Pension and Relief standards
  - 29.2% **EMS only volunteers**.
  - 26.8% **Fire suppression** only volunteers.
  - 36.6% **Non-emergency** response volunteers.
  - 9.7% **Other** (explain)
  - 4.8% **High School Cadet Programs**
  
5. Do you depend more on volunteers now than you did five years ago?
 

<u>36.6% (15)</u>	Depend more on volunteers now
<u>48.8% (20)</u>	Depend less on volunteers now
<u>14.6% (6)</u>	Same
  
6. Over the past five years has the percentage of volunteer personnel in your fire department increased, decreased, or stayed the same?
 

<u>12.1% (5)</u>	Increased
<u>60.9% (25)</u>	Decreased
<u>29.3% (11)</u>	Stayed the same
  
7. If the total percentage of volunteers has decreased; Why?

Please indicate the top three reasons by marking “1”, “2”, and “3” on the appropriate line. You may add your own reasons to the rating.

*Of the 25 districts indicating a decrease in percentage of volunteers, the percentage each of the following was selected “1”, “2”, or “3”:*

- 4.0% Department choice to reduce number of volunteers
- 32.0% Department has hired more paid personnel.
- 52.0% **Training requirements have become too difficult for Volunteers to maintain.**
- 24.0% Activity requirements have become too difficult for Volunteers to maintain.
- 32.0% Volunteer family and employment obligations.
- 4.0% Volunteers are not adequately reimbursed for their contribution.
- 8.0% Volunteers are not adequately recognized for their contribution.
- 12.0% Lack of quality activity for volunteers to perform.
- 40.0% **Too many certifications, standards, and mandates for volunteer personnel to meet.**
- 56.0% **Community demographics have changed. New people are not interested or don’t have the time to volunteer.**
- 48.0% **Young volunteers are joining for experience and career opportunity only. They do not stay around long.**
- 4.0% Long commutes to/from work. Too much travel time. Too much overtime.
- 4.0% Created higher volunteer activity standard. Lost less active volunteers.
- 4.0% Volunteer personnel don’t like the change.

8. If the total percentage of volunteers has increased or stayed the same; Why?

Please indicate the top three reasons by marking a “1”, “2”, or “3” next to the appropriate reason. You may add your own reason to the ranking.

*Of the 16 districts indicating increased or “same” percentage of volunteers, the percentage each of the following was selected “1”, “2”, or “3”:*

- 50.0% **We have gained a number of new volunteers looking for career opportunity and experience.**
- 37.5% **We have increased the volunteer numbers by opening up more volunteer opportunities such as non-emergency response volunteers.**
- 12.5% We are experiencing a new enthusiasm in our community to volunteer.
- 68.8% **We work very hard to promote the volunteer program and are committed to increasing the volunteer program in the future.**
- 6.3% Created new volunteer programs to appeal to more people.
- 6.3% Raised volunteer standards – Less disparity between volunteer/paid staff.
- 6.3% Low Turnover – usually only when someone retires.
- 6.3% Very popular career oriented program.
- 6.3% Husband/Wife teams join and stay.
- 6.3% Solid dedicated volunteers tend to stay (Older, more stable).
- Others
  - Cadet Program has attracted new volunteers.
  - We advertise the education and retirement benefits.
  - New volunteers are keeping up with existing.

# Volunteer Firefighter Survey

Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your sex? Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_

Some College \_\_\_\_\_

Associates Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Bachelors Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Study \_\_\_\_\_

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

---

---

---

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

---

---

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Which organizations?

---

---

---

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often \_\_\_\_\_  
Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_  
Seldom \_\_\_\_\_  
Never \_\_\_\_\_

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves \_\_\_\_\_  
Approves \_\_\_\_\_  
Doesn't care \_\_\_\_\_  
Disapproves \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disapproves \_\_\_\_\_

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves \_\_\_\_\_  
Approves \_\_\_\_\_  
Doesn't care \_\_\_\_\_  
Disapproves \_\_\_\_\_  
Strongly disapproves \_\_\_\_\_  
Doesn't Know I Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10% \_\_\_\_\_  
10% - 25% \_\_\_\_\_  
26% - 50% \_\_\_\_\_  
51% - 75% \_\_\_\_\_  
More than 75% \_\_\_\_\_

12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected \_\_\_\_\_  
More than I expected \_\_\_\_\_  
About what I expected \_\_\_\_\_  
Less than I expected \_\_\_\_\_  
Much less than I expected \_\_\_\_\_

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	_____
Seldom	_____
Sometimes	_____
Often	_____

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

_____	This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
_____	Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
_____	This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
_____	The friendships and teamwork attract me.
_____	I want to be a career firefighter.
_____	I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
_____	I have many friends in the fire department.
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

\_\_\_\_\_ Personality conflict with another member

\_\_\_\_\_ Too much training required

\_\_\_\_\_ Too much time required

\_\_\_\_\_ Too many rules and regulations in the fire department

\_\_\_\_\_ Just lost interest

\_\_\_\_\_ Too dangerous

\_\_\_\_\_ Too much supervision

\_\_\_\_\_ It's not as much fun as it used to be

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.

G/users/steve/98surve

Volunteer Firefighter Survey  
**Results of 135 Completed Surveys**  
Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? *Average of 6.75 Years*

2. How old are you? *Average of 31.7 Years*

3. What is your sex? Male *118 (87.4%)* Female *17 (12.6%)*

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School	7	(5.2%)
High School	28	(20.7%)
Some College	65	(48.1%)
Associates Degree	21	(15.5%)
Bachelors Degree	7	(5.2%)
Graduate Study	7	(5.2%)

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

*Personnel in this survey reported employment in a large variety of occupations. There was no particular pattern to the employment. Examples included Millwrights; Physical Therapists; Flight Attendant; Sales; Welder; Mechanic; Property Management; Electrician; Draftsman; Small Business Owners, etc.*

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

*Most of the survey respondents enjoyed active outdoor pursuits. The most frequent answers included fishing; hunting; camping; traveling; hiking; skiing; snowboarding; photography; basketball; baseball; woodworking; flying; sewing; etc.*

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes *61 (45.2%)* No *74 (54.8%)*

Which organizations?

***Again, a variety of interests. Most included youth sports; church activities; Rotary; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Professional Associations; Search and Rescue Teams; Volcano Rescue Team; etc.***

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often	<b>21</b>	<b>(15.5%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>67</b>	<b>(49.6%)</b>
Seldom	<b>30</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>
Never	<b>17</b>	<b>(12.6%)</b>

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>56</b>	<b>(41.5%)</b>
Approves	<b>50</b>	<b>(37.0%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>7</b>	<b>(5.2%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>2</b>	<b>(1.5%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0 %)</b>
Doesn't Apply	<b>19</b>	<b>(14.1%)</b>

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>45</b>	<b>(34.8%)</b>
Approves	<b>51</b>	<b>(37.8%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>26</b>	<b>(19.3%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>1</b>	<b>(0.7%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	
Doesn't Know I Volunteer	<b>4</b>	<b>(2.9%)</b>
Does not apply	<b>5</b>	<b>(3.7%)</b>

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10%	<b>25</b>	<b>(18.5%)</b>
10% - 25%	<b>48</b>	<b>(35.6%)</b>
26% - 50%	<b>34</b>	<b>(25.2%)</b>
51% - 75%	<b>16</b>	<b>(11.9%)</b>
More than 75%	<b>10</b>	<b>(7.4%)</b>
No Answer	<b>2</b>	<b>(1.5%)</b>



12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected	<b>10</b>	<b>(7.4%)</b>
More than I expected	<b>33</b>	<b>(24.4%)</b>
About what I expected	<b>78</b>	<b>(57.8%)</b>
Less than I expected	<b>13</b>	<b>(9.6%)</b>
Much less than I expected	<b>1</b>	<b>(0.7%)</b>

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	<b>75</b>	<b>(55.5%)</b>
Seldom	<b>31</b>	<b>(22.9%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>26</b>	<b>(19.3%)</b>
Often	<b>3</b>	<b>(2.2%)</b>

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- 112 (82.9%)** This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
- 19 (14.1%)** Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
- 97 (71.8%)** This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
- 46 (34.1%)** The friendships and teamwork attract me.
- 57 (42.2%)** I want to be a career firefighter.
- 23 (17.0%)** I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
- 16 (11.9%)** I have many friends in the fire department.

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

<b>40 (29.6%)</b>	Personality conflict with another member
<b>35 (25.9%)</b>	Too much training required
<b>94 (69.6%)</b>	Too much time required
<b>22 (16.3%)</b>	Too many rules and regulations in the fire department
<b>64 (47.4%)</b>	Just lost interest
<b>22 (16.3%)</b>	Too dangerous
<b>1 (0.7%)</b>	Too much supervision
<b>46 (34.1%)</b>	It's not as much fun as it used to be
<b>4 (2.9%)</b>	Career vs. Volunteer Conflicts
<b>2 (1.9%)</b>	Under-utilization of Volunteers
<b>3 (2.2%)</b>	Conflict with Family Obligations/Activities
<b>3 (2.2%)</b>	Not Enough Calls

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.  
***Received a number of comments; some appear in the text of this research paper.***

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.

G/users/steve/98survey

Volunteer Firefighter Survey  
**Volunteers Under 20 years Old**  
**12.5% of the Survey**

Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? *Average of 1.10 Years*

2. How old are you? *Average of 18 Years*

3. What is your sex? Male **16 (94.1%)** Female **1 (5.8%)**

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School	<b>6</b>	<b>(35.3%)</b>
High School	<b>6</b>	<b>(35.3%)</b>
Some College	<b>5</b>	<b>(29.4%)</b>
Associates Degree	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Bachelors Degree	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Graduate Study	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

*Most were students working a variety of part-time jobs..*

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

*Most of the survey respondents enjoyed active outdoor pursuits. The most frequent answers included fishing; hunting; camping; traveling; hiking; skiing; snowboarding; photography; basketball; baseball; woodworking; flying; sewing; etc.*

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes **8 (47.0%)** No **9 (52.9%)**

Which organizations?

***Again, a variety of interests. Most included youth sports; church activities; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Professional Associations; Search and Rescue Teams; Volcano Rescue Team; etc.***

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often	3	(17.6%)
Sometimes	5	(29.4%)
Seldom	7	(41.2%)
Never	2	(11.8%)

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	8	(47.0%)
Approves	2	(11.8%)
Doesn't care	1	(5.8%)
Disapproves	2	(11.8%)
Strongly disapproves	0	(0%)
Doesn't Apply	6	(35.3%)

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	6	(35.3%)
Approves	6	(35.3%)
Doesn't care	4	(23.5%)
Disapproves	0	(0%)
Strongly disapproves	0	(0%)
Doesn't Know I Volunteer	0	(0%)
Does not apply	1	(5.8%)

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10%	3	(17.6%)
10% - 25%	3	(17.6%)
26% - 50%	6	(35.3%)
51% - 75%	3	(17.6%)
More than 75%	2	(11.7%)
No Answer	0	(0%)

12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected	2	(11.7%)
More than I expected	3	(17.6%)
About what I expected	8	(47.0%)
Less than I expected	4	(23.5%)
Much less than I expected	0	(0%)

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	15	(88.2%)
Seldom	2	(11.7%)
Sometimes	0	(0%)
Often	0	(0%)

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- 12 (70.6%)** This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
- 3 (17.6%)** Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
- 16 (94.1%)** This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
- 2 (11.8%)** The friendships and teamwork attract me.
- 12 (70.6%)** I want to be a career firefighter.
- 1 (5.8%)** I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
- 2 (11.7%)** I have many friends in the fire department.

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>6 (35.3%)</b>  | Personality conflict with another member              |
| <b>2 (11.8%)</b>  | Too much training required                            |
| <b>11 (64.7%)</b> | Too much time required                                |
| <b>1 (5.8%)</b>   | Too many rules and regulations in the fire department |
| <b>9 (52.9%)</b>  | Just lost interest                                    |
| <b>6 (35.3%)</b>  | Too dangerous   |
| <b>0 (0%)</b>     | Too much supervision                                  |
| <b>5 (29.4%)</b>  | It's not as much fun as it used to be                 |
| <b>0 (0%)</b>     | Career vs. Volunteer Conflicts                        |
| <b>1 (5.8%)</b>   | Under-utilization of Volunteers                       |
| <b>1 (5.8%)</b>   | Not Enough Calls                                      |

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.  
***Received a number of comments; some appear in the text of this research paper.***

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.  
G/users/steve/98surv20

Volunteer Firefighter Survey  
**Volunteers 20 – 29 Years Old**  
**36.3% of the Survey**

Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? *Average of 3.5 Years*

2. How old are you? *Average of 22.3 Years*

3. What is your sex? Male **43 (87.7%)** Female **6 (12.2%)**

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
High School	<b>12</b>	<b>(24.5%)</b>
Some College	<b>25</b>	<b>(51.0%)</b>
Associates Degree	<b>11</b>	<b>(22.4%)</b>
Bachelors Degree	<b>1</b>	<b>(2.0%)</b>
Graduate Study	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

*A variety of part-time and full-time jobs Many in this age category reported themselves as part-time students seeking a career in the fire service..*

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

*Most of the survey respondents enjoyed active outdoor pursuits. The most frequent answers included fishing; hunting; camping; traveling; hiking; skiing; snowboarding; photography; basketball; baseball; woodworking; flying; sewing; etc.*

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes **14 (28.6%)** No **35 (71.4%)**

Which organizations?

***Again, a variety of interests. Most included youth sports; church activities; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Professional Associations; Search and Rescue Teams; Volcano Rescue Team; etc.***

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often	<b>6</b>	<b>(12.2%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>22</b>	<b>(44.9%)</b>
Seldom	<b>9</b>	<b>(18.7%)</b>
Never	<b>12</b>	<b>(24.5%)</b>

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>26</b>	<b>(53.1%)</b>
Approves	<b>13</b>	<b>(26.5%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>1</b>	<b>(2.0%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0 %)</b>
Doesn't Apply	<b>9</b>	<b>(18.4%)</b>

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>22</b>	<b>(44.9%)</b>
Approves	<b>15</b>	<b>(30.6%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>7</b>	<b>(14.3%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>1</b>	<b>(2.0%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Doesn't Know I Volunteer	<b>1</b>	<b>(2.0%)</b>
Does not apply	<b>2</b>	<b>(4.1%)</b>

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10%	<b>4</b>	<b>(8.2%)</b>
10% - 25%	<b>14</b>	<b>(28.6%)</b>
26% - 50%	<b>14</b>	<b>(28.6%)</b>
51% - 75%	<b>9</b>	<b>(18.4%)</b>
More than 75%	<b>8</b>	<b>(16.3%)</b>
No Answer	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>



12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected	<b>5</b>	<b>(10.2%)</b>
More than I expected	<b>9</b>	<b>(18.4%)</b>
About what I expected	<b>27</b>	<b>(55.1%)</b>
Less than I expected	<b>7</b>	<b>(14.3%)</b>
Much less than I expected	<b>1</b>	<b>(2.0%)</b>

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	<b>31</b>	<b>(63.3%)</b>
Seldom	<b>13</b>	<b>(26.5%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>5</b>	<b>(10.2%)</b>
Often	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- 41 (83.7%)** This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
- 7 (14.3%)** Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
- 24 (48.9%)** This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
- 16 (32.5%)** The friendships and teamwork attract me.
- 38 (77.5%)** I want to be a career firefighter.
- 9 (18.4%)** I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
- 6 (12.2%)** I have many friends in the fire department.

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- 14 (28.6%)**    Personality conflict with another member
- 8 (16.3%)**    Too much training required
- 34 (69.4%)**    Too much time required
- 6 (12.2%)**    Too many rules and regulations in the fire department
- 28 (57.1%)**    Just lost interest
- 11 (22.4%)**    Too dangerous
- 0 (0%)**        Too much supervision
- 21 (42.8%)**    It’s not as much fun as it used to be
- 2 (4.1%)**        Career vs. Volunteer Conflicts

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.  
***Received a number of comments; some appear in the text of this research paper.***

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.  
G/users/steve/98surv29

Volunteer Firefighter Survey  
**Volunteers 30-39 Years Old**  
**14.0% of the Survey**

Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? *Average of 6.4 Years*

2. How old are you? *Average of 35 Years*

3. What is your sex? Male *15 (78.9%)* Female *4 (21.1%)*

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School	<i>0</i>	<i>(0%)</i>
High School	<i>6</i>	<i>(31.6%)</i>
Some College	<i>8</i>	<i>(42.1%)</i>
Associates Degree	<i>3</i>	<i>(15.8%)</i>
Bachelors Degree	<i>1</i>	<i>(5.3%)</i>
Graduate Study	<i>1</i>	<i>(5.3%)</i>

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

*Personnel in this survey reported employment in a large variety of occupations. There was no particular pattern to the employment. Examples included Millwrights; Physical Therapists; Flight Attendant; Sales; Welder; Mechanic; Property Management; Electrician; Draftsman; Small Business Owners, etc.*

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

*Most of the survey respondents enjoyed active outdoor pursuits. The most frequent answers included fishing; hunting; camping; traveling; hiking; skiing; snowboarding; photography; basketball; baseball; woodworking; flying; sewing; etc.*

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes *5 (26.3%)* No *14 (73.7%)*

Which organizations?

***Again, a variety of interests. Most included youth sports; church activities; Rotary; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Professional Associations; Search and Rescue Teams; Volcano Rescue Team; etc.***

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often	<b>3</b>	<b>(15.8%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>10</b>	<b>(52.6%)</b>
Seldom	<b>5</b>	<b>(26.3%)</b>
Never	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.3%)</b>

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>5</b>	<b>(26.3%)</b>
Approves	<b>10</b>	<b>(52.6%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>2</b>	<b>(10.5%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0 %)</b>
Doesn't Apply	<b>2</b>	<b>(10.5%)</b>

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>3</b>	<b>(15.8%)</b>
Approves	<b>10</b>	<b>(52.6%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>5</b>	<b>(26.3%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Doesn't Know I Volunteer	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.3%)</b>
Does not apply	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10%	<b>7</b>	<b>(36.8%)</b>
10% - 25%	<b>7</b>	<b>(36.8%)</b>
26% - 50%	<b>4</b>	<b>(21.0%)</b>
51% - 75%	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.3%)</b>
More than 75%	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
No Answer	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.3%)</b>
More than I expected	<b>4</b>	<b>(21.1%)</b>
About what I expected	<b>13</b>	<b>(68.4%)</b>
Less than I expected	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.3%)</b>
Much less than I expected	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	<b>11</b>	<b>(57.9%)</b>
Seldom	<b>3</b>	<b>(15.8%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>5</b>	<b>(26.3%)</b>
Often	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

<b>10 (52.6%)</b>	This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
<b>1 (5.3%)</b>	Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
<b>16 (84.2%)</b>	This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
<b>6 (31.6%)</b>	The friendships and teamwork attract me.
<b>6 (31.6%)</b>	I want to be a career firefighter.
<b>4 (21.1%)</b>	I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
<b>3 (15.8%)</b>	I have many friends in the fire department.

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>5 (26.3%)</b>  | Personality conflict with another member              |
| <b>7 (36.8%)</b>  | Too much training required                            |
| <b>14 (73.7%)</b> | Too much time required                                |
| <b>0 (0%)</b>     | Too many rules and regulations in the fire department |
| <b>9 (47.4%)</b>  | Just lost interest                                    |
| <b>2 (10.5%)</b>  | Too dangerous   |
| <b>1 (05.3%)</b>  | Too much supervision                                  |
| <b>7 (36.8%)</b>  | It's not as much fun as it used to be                 |

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.  
***Received a number of comments; some appear in the text of this research paper.***

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.  
G/users/steve/98surv39

Volunteer Firefighter Survey  
**Volunteers 40-49 Years Old**  
**23.7% of the Survey**

Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? *Average of 13.25 Years*

2. How old are you? *Average of 44.2 Years*

3. What is your sex? Male **27 (84.4%)** Female **5 (15.6%)**

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
High School	<b>2</b>	<b>(6.3%)</b>
Some College	<b>18</b>	<b>(56.3%)</b>
Associates Degree	<b>3</b>	<b>(9.4%)</b>
Bachelors Degree	<b>5</b>	<b>(15.6%)</b>
Graduate Study	<b>4</b>	<b>(12.5%)</b>

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

*Personnel in this survey reported employment in a large variety of occupations. There was no particular pattern to the employment. Examples included Millwrights; Physical Therapists; Flight Attendant; Sales; Welder; Mechanic; Property Management; Electrician; Draftsman; Small Business Owners, etc.*

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

*Most of the survey respondents enjoyed active outdoor pursuits. The most frequent answers included fishing; hunting; camping; traveling; hiking; skiing; snowboarding; photography; basketball; baseball; woodworking; flying; sewing; etc.*

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes **22 (68.7%)** No **14 (31.3%)**

Which organizations?

***Again, a variety of interests. Most included youth sports; church activities; Rotary; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Professional Associations; Search and Rescue Teams; Volcano Rescue Team; etc.***

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often	7	(21.9%)
Sometimes	20	(62.5%)
Seldom	4	(12.5%)
Never	1	(3.1%)

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	13	(40.6%)
Approves	13	(40.6%)
Doesn't care	4	(12.5%)
Disapproves	1	(3.1%)
Strongly disapproves	0	(0%)
Doesn't Apply	1	(3.1%)

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	12	(37.5%)
Approves	10	(31.3%)
Doesn't care	7	(21.9%)
Disapproves	0	(0%)
Strongly disapproves	0	(0%)
Doesn't Know I Volunteer	1	(3.1%)
Does not apply	2	(6.3%)

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10%	7	(21.9%)
10% - 25%	15	(46.9%)
26% - 50%	6	(18.8%)
51% - 75%	3	(9.4%)
More than 75%	0	(0%)
No Answer	1	(3.1%)



12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected	<b>2</b>	<b>(6.3%)</b>
More than I expected	<b>11</b>	<b>(34.4%)</b>
About what I expected	<b>18</b>	<b>(56.3%)</b>
Less than I expected	<b>1</b>	<b>(3.1%)</b>
Much less than I expected	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	<b>6</b>	<b>(18.8%)</b>
Seldom	<b>11</b>	<b>(34.4%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>12</b>	<b>(37.5%)</b>
Often	<b>3</b>	<b>(9.4%)</b>

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

<b>32 (100%)</b>	This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
<b>6 (18.8%)</b>	Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
<b>28 (87.5%)</b>	This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
<b>16 (50.0%)</b>	The friendships and teamwork attract me.
<b>1 (3.1%)</b>	I want to be a career firefighter.
<b>4 (12.5%)</b>	I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
<b>2 (6.3%)</b>	I have many friends in the fire department.

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- 7 (21.9%)**      Personality conflict with another member
- 10 (31.3%)**      Too much training required
- 23 (71.9%)**      Too much time required
- 11 (34.4%)**      Too many rules and regulations in the fire department
- 10 (31.3%)**      Just lost interest
- 2 (6.3%)**        Too dangerous
- 0 (0%)**          Too much supervision
- 7 (21.9%)**      It's not as much fun as it used to be
- 4 (12.5%)**      Career vs. Volunteer Problems
- 2 (6.3%)**        Lack of Leadership
- 2 (6.3%)**        Conflict with Family Activities

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.  
***Received a number of comments; some appear in the text of this research paper.***

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.  
G/users/steve/98surv49

Volunteer Firefighter Survey  
**Volunteers 50+ Years Old**  
**13.3% of the Survey**

Survey results to be compiled in a research project for the  
National Fire Academy

Your honest answers to these questions are appreciated. Your completed survey will be compiled as part of a large group of surveys completed by other Volunteers. The purpose of this research is to learn more about today's Volunteer Firefighter. The results should be helpful in making the volunteer experience more positive for you, and others to follow. Thank you for your contribution to the betterment of the fire service.

Please review each question carefully before completing your answer.

1. How long have you been a Volunteer Firefighter? *Average of 16.24 Years*

2. How old are you? *Average of 55 Years*

3. What is your sex? Male *17 (94.4%)* Female *1 (5.5%)*

4. How much schooling have you completed?

Some High School	<i>1</i>	<i>(5.5%)</i>
High School	<i>2</i>	<i>(11.1%)</i>
Some College	<i>9</i>	<i>(50.0%)</i>
Associates Degree	<i>4</i>	<i>(22.2%)</i>
Bachelors Degree	<i>0</i>	<i>(0%)</i>
Graduate Study	<i>2</i>	<i>(11.1%)</i>

5. What type of work do you do for a living?

*Personnel in this survey reported employment in a large variety of occupations. There was no particular pattern to the employment. Examples included Millwrights; Physical Therapists; Flight Attendant; Sales; Welder; Mechanic; Property Management; Electrician; Draftsman; Small Business Owners, etc. Some in this age category were retired.*

6. What type of hobbies are you involved in?

*Most of the survey respondents enjoyed active outdoor pursuits. The most frequent answers included fishing; hunting; camping; traveling; hiking; skiing; snowboarding; photography; basketball; baseball; woodworking; flying; sewing; etc.*

7. Are you a volunteer or member of any other organization?

Yes *12 (66.6%)* No *6 (33.3%)*

Which organizations?

***Again, a variety of interests. Most included youth sports; church activities; Rotary; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Professional Associations; Search and Rescue Teams; Volcano Rescue Team; etc.***

8. How often does being a Volunteer Firefighter interfere with your family, work, or other obligations?

Often	<b>2</b>	<b>(11.1%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>10</b>	<b>(55.5%)</b>
Seldom	<b>5</b>	<b>(27.8%)</b>
Never	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.5%)</b>

9. Does your wife or husband (or significant other) approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>4</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>
Approves	<b>12</b>	<b>(66.7%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.5%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0 %)</b>
Doesn't Apply	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.5%)</b>

10. Does your employer approve of your service as a Volunteer Firefighter?

Strongly approves	<b>4</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>
Approves	<b>10</b>	<b>(55.5%)</b>
Doesn't care	<b>3</b>	<b>(16.7%)</b>
Disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Strongly disapproves	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Doesn't Know I Volunteer	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Does not apply	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.5%)</b>

11. About what percentage of your free time is spent with fire department related activities?

Less than 10%	<b>4</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>
10% - 25%	<b>9</b>	<b>(50.0%)</b>
26% - 50%	<b>4</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>
51% - 75%	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
More than 75%	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
No Answer	<b>1</b>	<b>(5.5%)</b>

12. Is the time you are spending with fire department related activities more or less than what you expected when you became a Volunteer Firefighter?

Much more than I expected	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
More than I expected	<b>6</b>	<b>(33.3%)</b>
About what I expected	<b>12</b>	<b>(66.7%)</b>
Less than I expected	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>
Much less than I expected	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

13. Have you ever considered quitting the fire department?

Never	<b>12</b>	<b>(66.7%)</b>
Seldom	<b>2</b>	<b>(11.1%)</b>
Sometimes	<b>4</b>	<b>(22.2%)</b>
Often	<b>0</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

14. Listed below are a number of reasons why people become Volunteer Firefighters. Please rank your top three reasons for being a Volunteer. Place a “1” next to the most important reason you became a Volunteer. Then put a “2” next to the second most important reason and a “3” next to the third most important reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

<b>17 (94.4%)</b>	This is a way for me to contribute significantly to my community.
<b>2 (11.1%)</b>	Being a Volunteer Firefighter has always been a tradition in our family.
<b>13 (72.2%)</b>	This is a chance for me to do some exciting things and help people at the same time.
<b>6 (33.3%)</b>	The friendships and teamwork attract me.
<b>0 (0%)</b>	I want to be a career firefighter.
<b>5 (27.8%)</b>	I learned first hand the importance of the fire department in this community with an emergency in my own family. I decided to volunteer after that experience.
<b>3 (16.7%)</b>	I have many friends in the fire department.

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

15. Listed below are a number of reasons why Volunteer Firefighters quit the fire department. Please rank your top three reasons why a Volunteer would want to quit. Place a “1” next to the most likely reason why a Volunteer would want to quit. Then put a “2” next to the second most likely reason a Volunteer would quit, and a “3” next to the third most likely reason.

Please use each number only once. You may add your own reasons to the ranking if you wish.

***The number and percentage of total that selected each item in their top three:***

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>8 (44.4%)</b>  | Personality conflict with another member              |
| <b>8 (44.4%)</b>  | Too much training required                            |
| <b>12 (66.7%)</b> | Too much time required                                |
| <b>4 (22.2%)</b>  | Too many rules and regulations in the fire department |
| <b>8 (44.4%)</b>  | Just lost interest                                    |
| <b>1 (5.5%)</b>   | Too dangerous   |
| <b>0 (0%)</b>     | Too much supervision                                  |
| <b>6 (33.3%)</b>  | It's not as much fun as it used to be                 |

***Received a number of individual additions to this question. Answers with less than two like comments were not posted in the results.***

16. Please add any other comments about being a Volunteer Firefighter here.  
***Received a number of comments; some appear in the text of this research paper.***

Thank you for contributing to this survey. Your fire department will receive a copy of the research paper with the results of this survey upon completion.  
G/users/steve/98surv50